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UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND FONDS DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENFANCE

UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017
CABLE ADDRESS: UNICEF - TELEPHONE: (212) 754-1234

25. OUT 1983

SPECIAL PROJECT FOR BASIC SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, MOTHERS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN EAST TIMOR

Background

East Timor, the area comprising the eastern half of the Island of Timor and the adjoining islands of Atauro and Jaco with a population of 555,350, is drought prone and has the major portion of the population living at subsistence level through primitive agriculture. The situation plus the disturbance of civil war and mass dislocation of the population resulted in conditions affecting a large percentage of the people which required massive relief effort.

In October 1979, the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) and the Indonesia Red Cross (PMI) initiated a relief operation providing food and medical services to 14 settlement areas which were selected because of their remoteness and inaccessibility by road, and the severeness of the health and nutrition status of the people. This emergency operation required the transport of food and medical supplies by plane and helicopter and continued until April 1981.

In April 1982, the PMI and UNICEF agreed to jointly implement a special project of basic services for children, mothers and their families in seven of the fourteen areas covered by the PMI/ICRC operations. These seven locations were selected by the PMI, UNICEF, ICRC, and the provincial government, based upon criteria of difficulty of access and the greatest need of health and nutriton services. Thirty-three villages with a population of nearly 44,000 people were covered.

The main objectives of the special project is to establish continuity of the initial activities carried out under emergency operations; to maintain and improve the health and nutrition status of the high risk communities and especially the most vulnerable group (mothers and children); and to help the communities develop their capacity to provide for their basic needs such as adequate food and nutrition, primary health care, potable water supply and basic education. Implementation of this project began in June 1982.

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Project Activities (June 1982 - June 1984)

Project activities were carried out at the village and sub-district level by village volunteers and health centre staff with supervision and technical and logistical support from PMI-UNICEF staff in Dili and Jakarta.

Training: Initial introduction to the programme was given to personnel from the departments of health, agriculture, education, family planning, co-operatives and religion and observers from local women and church organizations. Training was given to health centre staff and other sub-district level trainers of village volunteer workers. The training focussed not only on programme activities but also on non-formal interactive education techniques, as well as the skills of problem identification and priority setting, in the context of community motivation and education. Training and refresher training was given to village volunteers to (1) weigh children and use the growth chart for monitoring of nutrition status, (2) teach good weaning and child feeding practices and implement supplementary feeding, (3) identify vitamin A deficiency and anemia and distribute vitamin A and iron folate supplements, (4) teach the use of oral rehydration therapy for prevention of dehydration due to diarrhoea, and (5) diagnose and treat cases of malaria and skin infections.

Growth Monitoring and Basic Health Care: Sixty weighing posts were established and 330 trained village volunteers carried out monthly child weighing and other health activities as outlined above. About 88% of registered children were weighed each month as compared to the Indonesian nation-wide average of 56% for the national nutrition programme (UPGK).

Rehabilitative Supplementary Feeding: All under-five children identified during monthly weighing sessions as severely malnourished (weight below the red line on the growth charts) and those not gaining weight for three consecutive months, received daily supplementary food. Corn and oil supplied from Government and ICRC stocks were used. UNICEF provided cash subsidies to purchase protein sources including dried fish and pulses.

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Immunization and Anti-Yaws Campaigns: Nearly 100% of all eligible children under five years of age received BCG, DPT I, Polio I, and Measles vaccines, while over 80% of children received DPT II and Polio II. In addition, 5,800 women received at least one tetanus toxoid injection and over 3,700 received two tetanus immunizations, protecting their future infants from neonatal tetanus.

Yaws, a highly communicable, potentially disabling disease was noted by project staff to be highly prevalent in the sub-districts of Luro and Iliomar. Programme staff working with the Department of Health conducted an anti-yaws campaign, treating 264 cases and an additional 750 contacts. With regular follow up, this campaign will eradicate the disease from these areas.

Other activities: Following the recommendations made by a team of consultants, a variety of support activities were undertaken in co-operation with the departments of health, agriculture, animal husbandry, education and community development. Poultry, goats, fish fingerlings and vegetable seeds, were distributed to all seven locations.

Ten literacy study groups of 30 persons each in all seven sub-districts were formed and 210 tutors were trained. Books and writing implements have been distributed and all groups have begun activities. In addition to literacy classes, community gardening activities and income-generating activities for tutor groups are also taking place. The literacy study groups have planted five hectares of peanuts and beans in each sub-district, greatly increasing the total protein available to the diets of the inhabitants.

A piped water system has been installed in Laklubar. Water supply activities will be extended to all sub-districts.

Extension of the Special Project

The project was extended for another year from June 1984.

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Funding

Special contributions for the project were received as follows:

Donor	Date	Amount US $
Australia	August 1982	252,270
Netherlands	October 1982	55,000
Canada	October 1982	23,000
Sweden	February 1983	163,265
Australia	July 1983	438,642
Australia	July 1984	530,000
	Total	1,462,177

From the above sum, a balance of approximately $433,000 remained at the end of December 1984.

7th February 1985

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